

Chester Conn May 24. 1851

Dear Sir

I have just rec^d of letter of the 2^d inst: and hasten to say that I very much regret that there should be any difference of opinion between yourself & Ferry on the one hand and Cap^t. Wilkes on the other and still more that there sh^d. be any asperity of language and feeling in consequence of such difference of opinion. I am not sure that I thoroughly understand the points of difference. Indeed I supposed that there was only one - which I proposed to state -

The Library Comm^{ee} thought that in the botanical works & indeed in all the papers on natural history it was desirable, besides describing the objects in Latin the language of Science & in that sense universal, there should be descriptions in English. In addition to the reasons which Cap^t. Wilkes has suggested the Comm^{ee} thought this more likely to secure the continuance of the favour of Congress where the publications of the ex^p. expedition have been much opposed - many of the members

objecting to the strictly scientific character of the
works and desiring to see them ~~more~~ popularized
by such descriptions as might be more generally
understood — The com^{tee} in deciding that there
should be no English as well as no Latin had not the
least idea that they ~~would~~ were likely to cause any
discontent still less to disturb the feelings of respect
and the observance of the most ^{& among all} courtesy which they
desire to maintain towards all connected with the
preparation of the works of the exploring expedition.
I cannot but regret that the Library Com^{tee} had not
been addressed directly on the subject as soon as the
difficulty arose. They do not profess to be learned
men and would have been quite willing to be advised
by gentlemen for whom they have so much respect
as yourself and Dr Toney and I am very certain
that they would have conducted the correspondence on their
part with every regard to ~~the~~ your character feelings
& rights — I do not feel at liberty to reverse the
decision of the Com^{tee} and they cannot act during
the recess of congress. But I suppose that some of the

colleagues will go to press very shortly and that
there is yet time for such correspondence between us as
may obviate further difficulty. Pray inform me
if there is an insuperable objection to the English
descriptions which is the only subject of difference as I
understand and if so why —

Pardon me for saying that I suppose Cab! Wilkes
who is somewhat impetuous was moved by the term
"silly" which he understood in your letter to Dr Toney
was applied to the decision of the com^{tee} made I
believe upon consultation with him.

I hope you will have no objection to correspond
freely with me and that you will be assured that
the library com^{tee} have every desire to arrange
all the business of the publications so as to satisfy
the country and make your labours agreeable.

Very Respy Sir
J. M. St.

J. A. Pearce
Ch. J. Com^{tee} Library
of Congress

Dr Gray

Kew, near London, July 15th 1837.

My Dear Sir

Your kind and courteous letter of the 30th April bears the post-mark of "Chester town, M^d, June 25th," and therefore only reached me a few days ago.

In availing myself of the privilege of corresponding directly with yourself, I have only to say, at present, which I do with much satisfaction, that your statement of the views of the Library Committee, in respect to the Natural-History publications of the Exploring Expedition accords entirely with my own ideas of what would be most proper, and is in all respects satisfactory; namely, that "besides describing the objects in Latin, the language of science and in that ^{sense} ~~perfect~~ universal, there should be descriptions in English." I would have the brief ^{Latin} technical character of each described species followed by a detailed description in English, and give the locality, observations, general remarks, &c. in the same

language. At least, this seems the most desirable method under the circumstances. And such English descriptions will take a form all the more popular from their not being a literal translation of the Latin diagnostic or essential character, which is always expressed as ^{not the descriptions in English, but} succinctly and tersely as possible.

What I objected to was, ^{the latter} the printing of the very same statement twice over, totidem verbis, first in botanical Latin; and then in botanical English, ^{no less} technical and scarcely more intelligible to the general reader, and of no use at all to the naturalist. This seems to me not only a violation of good taste as well as a needless ^{in printing} expense, but also to stand in the way of ^{turning} the descriptive matter into as popular a form as it might otherwise take without detriment to its scientific character.

If it be said that there should ~~follow~~ be a translation of every specific character besides a detailed description in English, I reply that it seems to me still more objectionable to say the same thing three times over, once in Latin, and twice in English.

I have no objection to take care that the English description shall contain all that

is in the Latin (while ordinarily it will comprise much besides), but I do think it hard to be tied up to say it exactly in the same form, neither more nor less, as I was given to understand Capt. Wilkes required.

I imagine, however, that Dr. Gould, in the Ornithology, now printing (though I have not seen any of the printed sheets) has followed a method perfectly consonant with the views of the Library Committee - as I gather ^{from} your letter, and that the difficulty, which ~~indeed~~ led to my addressing you in my letter of the 2nd April, ~~has arisen from~~ ^{arose from} ~~was caused by Capt. Wilkes~~ ^{of the Committee's views} ~~from~~ a particular and too narrow a construction having been ~~assumed and insisted on~~ by Capt. Wilkes.

I may add that, ~~in~~ in my hurried and unstudied letter to Dr. Fernal, I was referring to what, according to my ideas, my fellow-botanists must have ~~thought it silly~~ in me to do, and that I had no thought of giving umbrage to Capt. Wilkes by applying the term either to the decision of the Library Committee or to himself.

I am glad to learn from you that none of the botanical portions of the work are likely to go to press immediately; for, on my return to Cambridge, at the end of August

I have the honor to be

Respectfully and truly
Your obs^d. faithful
servt.

Asbury

To the Hon J. A. Pearce
Chairman of the
Library Committee of
Congress.

Washington Feb 9. 1852

Dear Sir

You will pardon me I hope for
delaying to reply to yr letter of Jan'y. My library
and other business occupy so much time that I
find it difficult to pay proper attention to many
things which ought to be promptly considered.

It must perhaps be well if you w^d. send me
a portion of yr. manuscript for the committee's
examination. I am very sure that it will be
entirely satisfactory and I hope that in a little
while we may put it to press. Certainly I
suppose we can do so as soon as Mr. Dana's book
is completely printed - all our undertakings
copies of "Kols Philology & Ethnology" Dana's
phytes & Pickering's maps of man were destroyed in the
burning of the Congress Library -

Very Respyly &c
Wm. H. Peck

D^r Dear